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THE MEANING OF THE IMPERATIVE «LISTEN TO MOSES AND THE PROPHETS» (LK 16:29, 31) IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

1. Introduction

The imperative "listen to Moses and the Prophets" is the hortatory ending¹ of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31)². The document *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* accentuates that the Lukan Jesus considers it essential to "hear Moses and the Prophets" (Lk 16:29, 31) because they are the authorities whom he interprets and upon whom his teachings are based³.

In the Parable, the rich man requests Abraham to extend mercy on him, and even to send Lazarus to cool his parched tongue. When all his requests are refused, he pleads that Abraham send Lazarus to his brothers. Then Abraham gives him the definitive solution. He recommends listening to Moses and the Prophets (vv 29, 31)⁴. Jewish people have a very strong

¹ A hortatory ending is a typical feature of Luke's parables. See O. LEHTIPUU, *Characterization and Persuasion: The Rich Man and the Poor Man in Luke 16:19-31*, in D. RHOADS and K. SYREENI, eds., *Characterization in the Gospels: Reconceiving Narrative Criticism*, England 1999, 100.

² Unless it is necessary, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus will be henceforth referred to as "the Parable". Most scholars hold that the Parable has two parts: vv 19-26 and vv 27-31. It was Bultmann who confirmed Adolf Jülicher's theory in 1910 that the Parable has two parts: the first is derived from Egyptian and Jewish folklores (vv 19-26) and the second part (vv 27-31), as Hugo Gressmann suggested, is from Jesus himself: R. BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. John Marsh, New York, 1963, 196. Joachim Jeremias adopted Bultmann's view and argued that the Lukan Jesus added vv 27-31 as an epilogue to an existing folkloric material. The emphasis is on the second part. Hendrickx remarks that vv 29 and 31 say that the brothers of the rich man can avoid his fate by listening to Moses and the Prophets: H. HENDRICKX, *The Parables of Jesus*, Manila, 1987, 199. See also J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke: Introduction, Translation and Notes*, New York, 1985, 1126.

³ See PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*, (May 24, 2001) 7.

⁴ Abraham's recommendation to the rich man suggests that Moses and the Prophets are authoritative and adequate. They also contain what is necessary for repentance. As Bultmann said, "Moses and the Prophets have made God's will sufficiently plain, so that there is no need to ask for a miracle of the resurrection of

auditory bias. They have the שמע "hear/listen" which every observant Jew recites twice a day. According to Lamm, Jews have become history's most alert listeners. Their God is pre-eminently a voice, one who reveals his presence by speaking⁵. Deuteronomy 4:12 says: "Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard (שמעו) the sound of words but saw no form; there was only a voice (קול)".

The formula "Moses and the Prophets" (Μωϋσῆς καὶ οἱ Προφῆται) is Luke's variant of the attested Jewish idiom "the Law and the Prophets," short for the Hebrew Scriptures⁶. It may strictly refer to the Torah and the Nevi'im⁷. It occurs 15 times in the New Testament (9 times in Luke-Acts)⁸, but it is only in Luke, particularly in vv 29 and 31, that ἀκούω "listen" is attached to the formula, making it an imperative. Hence the imperative "Listen to Moses and the Prophets" is a significant biblical topic. This study delves into the meaning of this imperative in the context of the Gospel of Luke by closely looking into the significant occurrences of the verb ἀκούω and the formula Μωϋσῆς καὶ οἱ Προφῆται in the Gospel of Luke.

the dead person in order to induce belief." R. BULTMANN, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*..., 196. Tyson also notes that since according to Luke, it is in Jesus that Scriptures have been fulfilled (Lk 4:16-30; 9:28-36), a proper reading of Moses and the Prophets should point to the direction of Jesus. Not even the resurrection of Jesus could convince those who improperly read, and subsequently hear, Moses and the Prophets to care for the poor and avoid judgment. J. TYSON, *Torah and Prophets in Luke-Acts: Temporary or Permanent*, in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 31 (1992) 542.

⁵ N. LAMM, *The Shema: Spirituality and Law in Judaism*, Philadelphia 1998, 14.

⁶ F. REGALADO, *Jewish Background of the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus*, in *Asia Journal of Theology*, 16/2 (2002), 345; J. NOLLAND, *Word Biblical Commentary: Luke* 9:21-18:34, Vol. 35B, Dallas, 1993, 831.

⁷ J. A. FITZMYER says that when Luke wrote the Gospel, only the Torah, Nevi'im and Psalms could have been regarded as authoritative. His claim is based on Luke's explicit quotations: 16 from the Torah; 16 from the Prophets; 14 from the Psalms. Luke has no explicit quotation from other books of the Kethuvim. He notes further that Luke aims to construct a story of the Jesus-event in imitation of biblical narratives of the Old Testament. J. A. FITZMYER, *The Use of the Old Testament in Luke-Acts*, in *Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers* 31 (1992) 532.

⁸ See Lk 16:16, 29, 31; 24:27, 44; Acts 13:15; 24:14; 26:22; 28:33; Mt 5:17; 7:12; 11:13; 22:40; Jn 1:45; Rom 3:21. It appears once in Sirach (38:34b-39:1a) and thrice in its Prologue. It also occurs twice in Maccabees (2 Macc 15:9; 4 Macc 18:10). It has five significant occurrences in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 1:3; 1QS 8:15-16; 1QS 8:21-23; CD 5:21-6:1; 4Q 397). Henceforth New Testament will be abbreviated as NT.

2. Ἀκούω in the Gospel of Luke

Ἀκούω "listen" appears 427 times in the NT; it has 65 occurrences in the Gospel of Luke and 89 in the Acts of the Apostles⁹. Thus it is an important topic in the NT, particularly in Luke. Throughout the NT, hearing or listening is strongly emphasized, to some degree almost more so than seeing (Mk 4:24; Mt 11:4; 13:16; Lk 2:20; Acts 2:33; 1 Jn 1:1)¹⁰. In the NT the content of hearing is always the offering of salvation and ethical demand. Hearing, then, is always the reception both of grace and of the call to repentance. Moreover, ἀκούω means "hear," but more generally it means "come to know"¹¹. In the NT, ἀκούω means not only to hear but to take note of the content of what is heard. It also connotes a call to action. Since it is attached to "Moses and the Prophets," ἀκούω means hearing and taking note of the contents of the teachings of Moses and the Prophets¹².

The first significant occurrence of ἀκούω in the Gospel of Luke portrays Jesus as an ordinary Jewish pupil attentively listening to the teachings of "Moses and the Prophets," as taught by the teachers in a temple in Jerusalem when he was 12 years old¹³.

After three days they found him in the temple, "sitting" (καθεζόμενον) among the teachers, "listening" (ἀκούοντα) to them and "asking" (ἐπερωτώντα) them questions (Lk 2:46).

The verb καθεζόμενον "sitting" depicts Jesus as a learner, not as a teacher. Hence, ἀκούοντα "listening" comes first before ἐπερωτώντα "asking"¹⁴. Jesus' act of listening to the teachers of the law and asking them questions foreshadow the interests of the man Jesus, who will often be engaged in debates over the law.¹⁵ His questions amaze those who hear him (Lk 2:47).

⁹ R. MORGENTHALER, *Statistik Des Neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes*, Tübingen 1992, 70.

¹⁰ G. KITTEL, ἀκούω, in *TDNT* I, 219.

¹¹ G. SCHNEIDER, ἀκούω, in *EDNT* I, 53.

¹² V. OJOK, *Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus: Literary and Semiotic Analysis of Luke 16:19-31* (Diss.) Rome: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana Facultas Theologiae, 1993, 85. See also G. KITTEL, ἀκούω, in *TDNT* I, 219-220.

¹³ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke...*, 442.

¹⁴ A. A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, Edinburgh 1977, 77.

¹⁵ R. E. BROWN, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke*, New York 1977, 448.

Other significant occurrences attach ἀκούω to the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ "the word of God". The phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is particularly Lukan in the NT, occurring only once in Mark (7:13), in John (10:35) and in Matthew (15:6). But Luke uses it four times in the Gospel (5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28) and 14 times in Acts (4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 44, 46, 48; 16:32; 17:13; 18:11)¹⁶. It is likewise uniquely Lukan that ἀκούω is directly attached to ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (Lk 5:1; 8:21; 11:28; also Acts 13:7, 44).

Let us examine some of these occurrences.

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd "was pressing in" (ἐπικεῖσθαι) on him "to hear the word of God" (ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ). (Lk 5:1)

This is the first occurrence of the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in the Gospel of Luke. The phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ mentioned above refers to Jesus' own preaching. This is Luke's way of rooting the Christian community's proclamation in the teaching of Jesus himself. But as the phrase suggests, the ultimate source of this preaching is God himself, for the phrase means "the word of God" or "the word coming from God". This is so because the definite article τοῦ in the verse above is a subjective genitive or genitive of author. If it were an objective genitive, then the phrase would mean "the word telling about God" or simply "the word about God"¹⁷.

Moreover, Fitzmyer notes that some manuscripts (C, D, Θ, the Koine text-tradition) substitute the definite article τοῦ for the conjunction καί, making ἀκούειν an infinitive of purpose, "in order to listen to the word of God." In the verse above the infinitive ἀκούειν actually corresponds with the first one ἐπικεῖσθαι¹⁸.

Further, the attachment of ἀκούω to the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in Lk 5:1 exhibits a progression in the Parable of the Sower (Lk 8:4-15) with the appending of the verbs πιστεύω "believe" in Lk 8:12, 13 and κατέχω "hold fast" in Lk 8:15.

Let us examine the following significant verses of the Parable of the Sower:

¹⁶ R. MORGENTHALER, *Statistik...*, 70; J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke...*, 565.

¹⁷ See J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke...*, 565; H. H. HENDRICKX, *The Third Gospel for the Third World: Ministry in Galilee (Luke 3:1-6:49) Vol. 2A*, Quezon City 1997, 178.

¹⁸ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke*, 565.

The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that "they may not believe" (μὴ πιστεύσαντες) and be saved (Lk 8:12).

The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, "receive" (δέχονται) it with joy. But these have no root; "they believe" (πιστεύουσιν) only for a while and in a time of testing fall away (Lk 8:13).

As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear; but as they go on their way, "they are choked" (σμπνίγονται) by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature (Lk 8:14).

But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, "hold it fast" (κατέχουσιν) in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance (Lk 8:15).

Luke 8:12 speaks of people who merely hear but are not attracted to the word of God; they do not believe in it. According to Marshall, Luke adds πιστεύω to his Markan source to show that the words of Jesus must be heard with faith. There are two implicit moments in this "hearing with faith" – (a) initial act of believing, which comes from hearing (see Rom 10:14, 17); and (b) continuous listening/obeying after one has already believed.

The verb πιστεύσαντες "may (not) believe," an aorist participle, indicates an initial act of faith. Moreover, by his use of "the word" in this verse, Luke intends here what he intends in Lk 6:47 – hearing and acting out the words of Jesus¹⁹. Πιστεύω is synonymous with κατέχω. Luke 8:14 excludes the phrase ὁ λόγος and the verb πιστεύω, but the sense of the verse remains similar to the other three verses.

In Lk 8:13, the verb πιστεύουσιν "believe," a present indicative, connotes a continuing attitude of the initial act of faith. But people who belong here have faith only for a while²⁰. They receive the faith with joy only initially. Hardships and testing dissolve their faith. According to Hendrickx, the term δέχονται "receive" is a Lukan expression for responding positively toward Jesus, the Gospel, or the Gospel messengers (Lk 9:5, 48, 53; 10:8, 10; 18:17)²¹. Luke 8:12 and Lk 8:13 negate the verb πιστεύω. Likewise Lk 8:14

¹⁹ See Mk 4:1-20, especially v 15. H.H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, Michigan 1979, 325.

²⁰ H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke*..., 325.

²¹ H. HENDRICKX, *The Third Gospel*..., 138.

has an implied negation of πιστεύω through the use of the verb σμπνίγονται "are choked."

Luke 8:14 speaks of those who hear the word of God, but the "cares and riches and pleasures of life" prevent them from persevering in their belief. Hendrickx says that cares (Lk 8:14) refer to anxieties for the daily needs of life which money can provide (see Lk 12:22-34; 21:34), and an interest in pleasures leads one to seek the riches that can provide them²². In the Parable, the rich man and his brothers may have heard Moses and the Prophets, but their riches choke them and they engage in the pleasures of life. Consequently, they fail to act out what Moses and the Prophets teach, especially about caring for the poor.

Luke 8:15 shows that the key to successfully bearing fruit is an "honest and good heart" which enables those who belong here to hold fast (κατέχουσιν) to the word of God. God will cause the word to grow and prosper among those who have heard the word in good faith²³. Hearing the word in good faith entails retaining the word of God and persistently bearing the fruit of it. Those who do so are mature Christians who have "honest and good heart." The word of God enables them to exude nobility, generosity and mature fruition²⁴.

Plummer says that ἀκούω means the same in all four cases (Lk 8:12, 12, 14, 15). He identifies the Eleven and the ministering women with the fourth case, while Judas Iscariot belongs to the third²⁵. Hence, hearing the word of God is not enough. One needs to believe in it, hold fast to it despite the difficulties, and then to put it into practice. "Hearing the word in good faith," therefore, entails hearing, believing, holding fast and putting into practice the word of God. The rich man merely hears Moses and the Prophets; he may have believed or even held fast to them, but he certainly fails to do what they teach. Thus, he does not belong to the fourth case.

Each of the verses above (Lk 8:12-15) omits the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, but it is implied in each of them because Lk 8:11 equates the seed with the word of God: Ἐστὶν δὲ αὕτη ἡ παραβολή· Ὁ σπόρος ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." In fact, the focus now is on the seed, not anymore on the sower²⁶.

²² *Ibid.*, 140.

²³ *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁴ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke*..., 712.

²⁵ A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*..., 222.

²⁶ H. HENDRICKX, *The Third Gospel*..., 135.

Furthermore, the attachment of ἀκούω to ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ shows a progression with the appending of the verbs ποιέω "do" in Lk 8:21 and φυλάσσω "keep" in Lk 11:28. Let us examine these two verses:

But he said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who 'hear the word of God and do it' (τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀκούοντες καὶ ποιούντες)" (Lk 8:21).

This verse is parallel to Mk 3:35: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother". And so is Matthew 12:50, which reads: "For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother". Matthew merely changes "God" to "Father in Heaven." Luke adds the verb ἀκούοντες "those who hear/listen to," and he changes τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ "the will of God" to τὸν λόγον τοῦ Θεοῦ "the word of God." The Lukan version is occasioned by the Parable of the Sower in which the seed is equated with the word of God (Lk 8:11). The Parable of the Sower also occasions the saying of Jesus on the immediate necessity of listening to the word of God: "Let anyone with ears to hear listen" (Lk 8:8; 14:35; also Mk 4:23; Mt 11:15; 13:43).

There is an echo of this saying in the Parable. By calling Abraham πᾶτερ "father," in the vocative case, the rich man claims kinship with Abraham which the latter acknowledges by calling the rich man τέκνον "child" (Lk 16:24, 25, 30). However, the rich man's failure to listen to the word of God through Moses and the Prophets severs his tie with Abraham. The true children of Abraham are those who listen to Moses and the Prophets, in the same way as the true mother and brothers of Jesus are those who hear the word of God and do it.

But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey/keep (φυλάσσουντες) it" (Lk 11:28).

Instead of ποιέω the verb φυλάσσω "obey" is used, but the sense remains the same. Set in the context of the woman who says to Jesus: "Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you" (Lk 11:27), this saying of Jesus alludes to Lk 8:21. This verse confirms that the mother of Jesus is worthy of praise, not only because she has given birth to him and nursed him but also because she is among those who have listened to the word of God, believed it (Lk 1:45), and acted on it (Lk 8:21; also Acts 1:14)²⁷. In contrast, the rich man and his brothers in the Parable may have heard Moses and the Prophets, but they do not do or obey their teachings, especially on caring for the poor.

²⁷ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke*..., 927.

Further, two sayings of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke show progression of ἀκούω by substituting ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ with μου τῶν λόγων "his (Jesus') words".

I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, "hears my words, and acts on them" (ἀκούων μου τῶν λόγων καὶ ποιῶν αὐτούς) (Lk 6:47).

But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation (Lk 6:49).

These sayings of Jesus cap the Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:20-49). It is noteworthy that the Sermon on the Plain is framed within two occurrences of ἀκούω: "they had come to hear (ἦλθον ἀκούσαι) him" (6:18) and "comes to me, hears (ἀκούων) my words, and acts on them" (6:47). Since these sayings are set in the context of the Sermon on the Plain, whose first part (Lk 6:20-26) is echoed in the Parable's reversal of fortune of the rich and the poor, hearing the words of Jesus and acting on them, therefore, have reference to listening to Moses and the Prophets.

Other significant occurrences of ἀκούω include hearing or listening to Jesus himself (Lk 21:38; 23:8). Furthermore, the imperative "Listen to Moses and the Prophets" may be a reconfiguration of the imperative to listen to Jesus in the transfiguration pericope (Lk 9:28-36; see also Mk 9:2-8; Mt 17:1-8).

Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; 'listen to him' (αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε)" (Lk 9:35).

Luke writes αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε, while the Markan parallel has the word order inverted: ἀκούετε αὐτοῦ (Mk 9:7). Fitzmyer notes that Luke's order is closer to the LXX of Deut 18:15: αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε "you shall listen to him"²⁸. This imperative is reconfigured from Deut 18:15 where Moses tells the people that they must listen to the prophet like him whom the Lord will raise. Moreover, Deut 18:19 connotes that people are obliged to listen to such a prophet, and listening means doing what is heard.

Also significant is the mention of Moses and Elijah in Lk 9:30. Moses and Elijah here represent the Law and the Prophets²⁹. Echoing studies

²⁸ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke*..., 803.

²⁹ A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*..., 251; H. Marshall agrees with other scholars who contend that the presence of Moses and Elijah refutes the idea that Jesus is just equal with them. H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke*..., 384. H. Hendrickx says that apart from the transfiguration narrative, there is no other instance in the NT in which Moses and Elijah are named together. See H.

done on this pericope, Fitzmyer says that this formula (Moses and Elijah) and its order of names are dependent on the formula "Moses and the Prophets" (Lk 16:19, 31; 24:27), although the order is reversed in Acts 26:22³⁰. Moses really represents the law (Torah) as attested by the reconfiguration of Deut 18:15. Elijah, in Jewish thought, is not generally considered a representative of the prophets, but Mal 3:23 clearly gives the returning Elijah the title of prophet³¹.

In the transfiguration narrative, Luke strongly urges his audience to listen to Jesus, while Moses and the Prophets, who are represented by Elijah, stand in the background. In the Parable, which is primarily addressed to Jesus' disciples (16:1) and to the Pharisees (16:14), listening to Moses and the Prophets is recommended.

3. Μωϋσῆς καὶ οἱ Προφῆται in the Gospel of Luke

Aside from the two occurrences in the Parable, there are three occurrences of the formula Μωϋσῆς καὶ οἱ Προφῆται in the Gospel of Luke. We shall examine each of them.

The "law and the prophets" (ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται) were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone tries to enter it by force (Lk 16:16).

But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for "one stroke of a letter in the law" (τοῦ νόμου μίαν κεραίαν) to be dropped (Lk 16:17).

Luke 16:16, if read in isolation from Lk 16:17, seems to abrogate the law and the prophets after the coming of John. Most scholars, however, reject the notion that John was not part of the realized Kingdom but was just a

HENDRICKX, *The Third Gospel*..., 277. Further, S. Wilson says that Moses and Elijah symbolize the law and the prophets. S. S. WILSON, *Luke and the Law*, Cambridge 1983, 2.

³⁰ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke*..., 799.

³¹ F. DANKER, *Jesus and the New Age According to Luke*, Missouri 1972, 116. Taking Moses and Elijah as representatives of the law and the prophets is an old view. For Liefeld, these two men are mentioned here because both were respected figures in the Hebrew Scriptures. Moses had a mountaintop experience in Sinai where his face shone (Ex 34:35). He was not just a lawgiver but also a prophet (Deut 18:15-18). Elijah, on the other hand, was an eschatological figure in the Jewish worldview (Mal 3:23). Both died in a spectacular way: Moses died at the Lord's command (Deut 34:5) and Elijah was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:11). See W. L. LIEFELD, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke*, Michigan 1995, 132.

Jewish preacher of repentance before the coming of the Kingdom; they believe that Luke understood John the Baptist as a bridge between the old and the new age³². Hendrickx says that the expression "the law and prophets" in the context of Lk 16:16 does not refer to the Hebrew Scriptures as such because for the Lukan Jesus and for Luke the Hebrew Scriptures did not cease with the coming of the Kingdom, as Lk 16:17 shows. The Kingdom does not make the law obsolete; rather the Pharisees are made accountable before the law, no part of which is abridged (Lk 16:17). The expression "the law and the prophets" refers here to the Old Testament period or age, the Old Testament period of salvation history³³.

Luke 16:17 asserts the validity of the law,³⁴ and of course, the validity of the prophets. Marshall contends that this verse indicates that for Luke the validity of the law and the prophets has not ended; what has ended is the activity which produced the law and the prophets. This verse is to be understood as Jesus' rhetorical stress on the permanence of the law, but of the law which is transformed and fulfilled in Jesus' own teachings³⁵. Further, Tyson remarks that an interpretation of Scripture that does not point to Jesus is, in Luke's scheme of things, a misinterpretation³⁶.

Wilson says that the phrase τοῦ νόμου μίαν κεραίαν "one stroke of a letter in the law" (Lk 16:17) indicates that the whole of the law, in all its details is meant and not just its moral demands or its ideal contents. Hence its sense is different from ὁ νόμος "the law" (Lk 16:16), which is attached to οἱ προφῆται "the prophets." Further, this verse is similar to Mt 5:18: "Until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter (ῥῶτα), not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished." The immediate contexts of both verses assert the validity of the law and the prophets (Mt 5:7; Lk 16:16), which is strongly reasserted in the Parable³⁷.

³² H. Hendrickx has references to other scholars who share this view. See H. HENDRICKX, *The Third Gospel*..., 216.

³³ *Ibid.*, 214.

³⁴ S. WILSON, *Luke and the Law*..., 13.

³⁵ H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke*..., 627-628.

³⁶ Tyson asserts that the permanence of the authority of Moses and the Prophets lies in their Christological significance. Commenting on Lk 9:28-36, Tyson writes: "Once Moses and Elijah have served their purposes, they disappear (Lk 9:36). The Torah and the Prophets function Christologically and point forward to Jesus as God's son, and once they have done this, they retreat to leave Jesus as sole authority." See J. TYSON, *Torah and Prophets in Luke-Acts*..., 543-544, 546.

³⁷ Tyson says that the Parable affirms the authority of Torah and prophets forcefully. *Ibid.*, 542.

In preaching about the Kingdom of God, Jesus considers the law and the prophets as normative, or as basis for his preaching, although his preaching clarifies the law and the prophets³⁸. Wilson observes that the juxtaposition of Lk 16:16 and 17 illustrates the distinction between the epoch of the law and that of the Kingdom of God preached by Jesus. Elements of the law, however, persist in Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom. He writes: "The law and the prophets, understood as a call to repentance, co-exist with the message of the Kingdom, and the law is thus carefully slotted into Luke's conception of salvation history"³⁹.

Then "beginning with Moses and all the prophets" (ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν), he interpreted to them the things about himself "in all the scriptures" (ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς) (Lk 24:27).

The phrase ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν Προφητῶν (Lk 24:27) is worth delving into. The repetition of the preposition ἀπὸ "from," which speaks of separation in a broader sense,⁴⁰ indicates that the Prophets are regarded as distinct from the Pentateuch⁴¹. 'Απὸ may also denote movement,⁴² in which case, the phrase above could refer to Moses as the first of the prophets and all of those whom God raised up after him⁴³. It could further mean that Jesus started with the law and the prophets in finding things written about him⁴⁴. In the verse above, however, avpo. is used to indicate the beginning of a series⁴⁵. Hence, it is most likely that the phrase refers to the books of Moses (Pentateuch) and the Prophets or to "all the scriptures"⁴⁶.

³⁸ J. A. Fitzmyer makes it clear that supplementing the law does not mean challenging the law, much less, replacing the law. In Lk 18:18-25, Jesus tells the rich ruler who has followed the law since his youth to sell his possessions and give to the poor. The exhortation to sell his possessions and give to the poor supplements the law and the prophets. See J. A. FITZMYER, *Luke the Theologian: Aspects of His Teaching*, Manila 1995, 181-187. See also S. Wilson, *Luke and the Law...*, 27.

³⁹ S. WILSON, *Luke and the Law...*, 54.

⁴⁰ G. SCHNEIDER, ἀπο, in *EDNTI*, 124.

⁴¹ A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary...*, 555.

⁴² G. SCHNEIDER, ἀπο, in *EDNTI*, 124.

⁴³ J. GREEN, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of Luke*, ed. GORDON D. FEE, Michigan 1997, 848.

⁴⁴ H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke...*, 897.

⁴⁵ G. SCHNEIDER, ἀπο, in *EDNTI*, 124.

⁴⁶ H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke...*, 897.

Plummer, however, says that the phrase could just be a lax construction. Hence he writes: "It does not help much to say that Moses and the Prophets are here considered as one class in distinction from the rest of the OT, and that the meaning is that he began with these and thence passed to the Psalms (v 44) and other books"⁴⁷.

According to Fitzmyer, ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς "in all the scriptures" (Lk 24:27) would seem to suggest that "all the scriptures" were included in "Moses and the Prophets." "Prophets" should be understood in the usual Jewish sense of the "former prophets" (Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings) and the "latter prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets)⁴⁸. Marshall, on the other hand, says that the phrase ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς, may mean that Jesus searched all the Scriptures starting from the law and the prophets. He further contends that if this view is adopted, then the phrase ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς will refer to the books of the Hebrew Scriptures generally (Lk 24:32, 45; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:24, 28). "Moses and the Prophets" will simply refer to the Torah and the Nevi'im, respectively.

Moreover, in the NT, αἱ γραφαί is constantly used of the Canon of the Hebrew Scriptures; it means Scriptures, and not just passages of Scripture. This is shown in the elucidation of ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς in Lk 24:27 by ἀρξάμενος ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως καὶ ἀπὸ πάντων τῶν προφητῶν "beginning with Moses and all the prophets." This expository instruction of the risen Lord is described in Lk 24:32, 45 as διήνοιγεν "opening" of the γραφαί⁴⁹.

Luke writes that Jesus interpreted (διερμηνεύσεν) the Scriptures to them. The term διερμηνεύω elsewhere in the NT refers to explaining or interpreting (see 1 Cor 12:30; 14:5, 13, 27), and Luke presents Jesus in Lk 24 as an interpreter of Scripture⁵⁰. Just like any other text, the Scriptures of Israel are capable of multiple readings. Jesus' reading is one of them. In particular the Lukan Jesus interprets the Scriptures in the light of God's purpose and plan – resulting in the concept of Jesus as Messiah – suffering, dying and rising. And for Luke, Jesus' life, death and resurrection serve as hermeneutical guide in interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures⁵¹.

⁴⁷ A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary...*, 555.

⁴⁸ See J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke...*, 1567.

⁴⁹ G. SCHRECK, γραφή, in *TDNTI*, 752.

⁵⁰ K. LITWAK, *Echoes of Scripture in Luke-Acts: Telling the History of God's People Intertextually*, London 2005, 118-119.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 119-120.

Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in 'the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms' (τῷ νόμῳ Μωϋσέως καὶ τοῖς προφήταις καὶ ψαλμοῖς) must be fulfilled" (Lk 24:44).

The addition of the "psalms" (ψαλμοῖς) to "Moses and the Prophets" is a significant progression in the formula. Only here in the NT is "the Psalms" named alongside "the law of Moses and the Prophets"⁵². This may indicate an awareness of the tripartite division of the Hebrew Scriptures (Torah, Nevi'im, and Kethuvim) during the writing of this passage. In the NT this is the only reference to the possible tripartite division of the Hebrew Canon, but this does not prove that the Canon was at this time fixed and closed⁵³. Fitzmyer notes that Luke has 16 explicit quotations from the Pentateuch (10 in the Gospel, 6 in Acts) and 16 from the Prophets (7 in the Gospel, 9 in Acts). Apart from the Psalms (14 quotations), Luke has no explicit quotation from the Kethuvim⁵⁴. He then contends that Luke's mode of referring to the Hebrew Scriptures points to the parts of the Hebrew Scriptures which Jews regarded as authoritative when Luke wrote the Gospel⁵⁵.

Aside from Lk 24:44, only in Lk 2:22 and Acts 28:23 does the phrase "law of Moses" occur in the entire Luke-Acts. Moreover, the addition of the "the psalms" to the formula "Moses and the Prophets" could be the substitute for "all the scriptures" in Lk 24:27. This possibility is supported by this verse: "Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures" (Lk 24:45).

Although it was the best known and most influential among the books in the Kethuvim, the Book of Psalms scarcely stands for all the Kethuvim⁵⁶. Nonetheless, Luke appeals to "Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" in order to muster the fullest scriptural support possible. The risen Christ appeals to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures as support for his proclamation of the Gospel. However, this whole scriptural witness was probably not tripartite. Psalms, which were said to have been associated

⁵² H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke...*, 905.

⁵³ A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary...*, 562.

⁵⁴ J. A. FITZMYER, *The Use of the Old Testament...*, 532.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 532. See also H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke...*, 905.

⁵⁶ A. PLUMMER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary...*, 162; J. A. FITZMYER, *The Gospel According to Luke...*, 1558; H. MARSHALL, *The Gospel of Luke...*, 905. The Psalms have also an important role in Luke's interpretation of the Passion of Jesus. See J. GREEN, *The New International Commentary...*, 857.

with David, were seen as prophetic – the extension of the Prophets. In fact Acts 2:30-31 testifies that David was regarded as a prophet⁵⁷.

4. Conclusion

The formula, "Moses and the Prophets," stands generally for the Hebrew Scriptures, but in some occasions the formula specifically refers to the Torah and the Nevi'im. In the Gospel of Luke, "Moses" more frequently refers to the Law in general than to specific laws. "Prophets" generally refers to the Nevi'im, but it can also include the Psalms and other books of the Kethuvim. In general the coupling of Moses and the Prophets into a formula refers to the substance of the Old Testament revelation.

The imperative "Listen to Moses and the Prophets" is uniquely Lukan; it is found only in the Parable. Ἀκούω "listen," which also alludes to the שמע, entails understanding and putting into practice what is heard. Occurrences of ἀκούω in the Gospel of Luke speak of listening to the word of God and acting on it (e.g., Lk 6:47, 49; 8:21; 11:31). Several times, Luke directly attaches ἀκούω to the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ "the word of God" (e.g. 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28). Hence the attachment of ἀκούω to the formula Μωϋσῆς καὶ οἱ Προφῆται in Lk 16:29, 31 does not involve just knowing and doing what is heard, but it entails hearing, knowing and putting into practice the Word of God found in "Moses and the Prophets". Listening to Moses and the Prophets means that one needs to believe in them, to hold fast to their teachings despite the difficulties, and then to put their teachings into practice. In the Parable, the rich man may have merely heard Moses and the Prophets; or he may have believed or even held fast to them, but he certainly fails to do what they teach.

Moreover, the Lukan Jesus regards Moses and the Prophets highly. As an interpreter of the Scriptures, Jesus considers the teachings of Moses and the Prophets, especially on caring for the poor, as adequate and authoritative. Hence, he recommends listening to them.

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⁵⁷ C. EVANS, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Canon of Scripture in the Time of Jesus*, in P. W. FLINT, ed., *The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation*, Grand Rapids 2001, 76-77.